

Remarks

This application is filed pursuant to 35 USC §371 and claims priority to EP 99201172.6 filed April 12, 1999. Certain changes have been made to the claims and new claims have been added, the new claims finding support in the specification of the instant application.

This application as filed contains claims 1-43. Claims 1-40 are original claims, and these claims have been amended to comply with United States practice. Claims 41-43 are new and have been added as a result of the amendments made to certain of claims 1-40. Support for the new claims is found in the specification of the present application at pages 2 and 41. No new matter is added by this amendment.

An early and favorable action on the merits is solicited earnestly.

Should the Examiner have questions or comments regarding this application or this amendment, Applicants' attorney would welcome the opportunity to discuss the case with the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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February 5, 2001

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" in an envelope addressed to: Attention: Office of Petitions, Box DAC, Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 2001 on February 5, 2001 with the number of the Express Mail label being **EK794120573US**.

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